

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Joel Asaph Allen: An Early Iowa Ornithologist

Thomas H. Kent and Judy A. Putney

Joel Asaph Allen was born 19 July 1838 and raised on a farm outside of Springfield, Massachusetts. Allen, a self-taught naturalist, started shooting birds at age 13. From 1858 to 1862 he was a student at the Wilbraham Academy and Home Studies. In his last year at the academy, Allen sold his specimen collection to pay expenses and used remaining funds from the sale to enter Lawrence Scientific School at Cambridge. He was a student of Louis Agassiz beginning in 1862 and accompanied him on an expedition to Brazil in 1865. Allen was so ill on his return from the trip to Brazil that he decided he would not be able to pursue his passion for natural history and returned home to the farm. The change of occupation improved his health and his passion was renewed. He planned a natural history collecting trip to the Midwest. Advanced orders for specimens paid for the expedition.

Allen's contact with Iowa started in the early settlement period. He presumably traveled to Iowa by train and then by covered wagon to west-central Iowa (Dallas, Guthrie, Boone, Greene, Carroll, Crawford, Sac, Calhoun, and Audubon counties) during July, August and September 1867. Allen accompanied Orestes H. St. John, who had also been on the Agassiz trip to Brazil, and a teamster-cook. The party collected plants, animals, and insects. Allen had two lists of Iowa birds. One is a list of birds he had seen himself and the other was a hypothetical list requested by Charles A. White, the state geologist. The hypothetical list prepared by Allen was, by all accounts, simply a list of birds that might be seen in Iowa and was often misquoted as real records during the next 100 years (White 1870). His list of species actually seen in Iowa included 66 first records for Iowa (Allen 1868). Allen was a meticulous note taker, but we were unable to find his Iowa notes.

Allen was founder of the American Ornithologists' Union and its president from 1883 to 1891. He was editor of *The Auk* from 1884 to 1912. He was co-editor of the first AOU check-list in 1886 with Elliott Coues, Robert Ridgeway, William Brewster, and H.W. Henshaw. He was also on the check-list committee in 1895 and 1910. He was Assistant Curator at the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge from 1871 to 1885. In 1885, he was appointed as the first curator of birds and mammals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. He remained in this position until 1921.

Somehow Allen's trip to Iowa was omitted by his biographer (Chapman 1927).

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## **Keyes and Williams: Early Iowa Ornithologists**

*Thomas H. Kent and Judy A. Putney*

Charles Rollin Keyes and Henry Smith Williams both graduated from the State University of Iowa in 1887 and combined their lists of specimens in a paper entitled “Preliminary Annotated Catalogue of the Birds of Iowa”, which we consider the landmark checklist of Iowa birds. Their checklist brought the total list to 272, which accounts for more than half of the number of birds on the current list. There are 57 first records attributed to them. We found no other interaction between Keyes and Williams. Here we present brief biographies of these two highly successful men.

### **Charles Rollin Keyes (1864-1942)**

Charles Rollin Keyes, not to be confused with fellow ornithologist Charles Reuben Keyes, was born in Des Moines, Iowa on 24 December 1864. Keyes’ Iowa ornithological publications include Pileated Woodpecker (Keyes 1884), Evening Grosbeak (Keyes 1888a), blackbirds (Keyes 1888b), kinglets (Keyes 1888c) and Cape May Warbler (Keyes 1888d).

Keyes spent his youth in Des Moines and received his early education in the Des Moines schools. He attended the State University of Iowa at Iowa City where he received B.S. and A.M. degrees. Keyes then spent three years attending John Hopkins University and graduated with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Keyes’ main field of study was geology and while working in Iowa investigating the mineral resources of the state he focused on getting the Iowa Geological Survey out of politics.

Dr. Keyes was appointed as the State Geologist of Missouri and reorganized the methods of their Department of Geology and Mines. In the three years that Keyes worked for the Missouri Geological Survey, the survey was more productive than the previous 30

years. Keyes was known nationally as an expert on geology and mining, and his professional advice as a mining engineer was continually sought by mining companies planning to expand. He was also well known as an accomplished writer and had a reputation for making publications on geology interesting to the average reader. The list of his writings is lengthy and includes volumes of books, surveys, magazine articles, and memoirs on a wide variety of topics. Keyes was the president of the New Mexico School of Mines from 1902 to 1906. Throughout his life, he also worked as a consulting mine engineer, as editor of *Pan-American Geologist*, and he was even a Democratic nominee for United States Senate from Iowa in 1918. Keyes spent most of his time during the last decade of his life at his home in Tucson, Arizona. However, he always maintained his residence in Des Moines. He died in Tucson after a lingering illness in 1942.

### **Henry Smith Williams (1863-1943)**

Henry Smith Williams was born on 4 March 1863 in Durand, Illinois. His parents were Edward West Williams and Orilla Nancy (Webster) Williams. Henry's father Edward was a doctor and he came from a long line of doctors in their family. Henry had a brother, Edward Hunting Williams, and a sister, Harriet Goodhue (Williams) Myers. All three children were born in Illinois, and the family moved to Charles City, Iowa in 1873. The family lived on a farm while Edward's brother also farmed nearby. Henry and his siblings were interested in birds and other animals at a young age. Henry became a good shot and also learned to be a taxidermist. He started to only shoot birds that he wanted to observe and mount. His father purchased him a large glass display case, and Henry filled it up with his prized bird mounts. As he got older, Henry began mounting specimens for money for a man from out of town.

Henry graduated from high school in Charles City in 1879. He was the only boy in a class of ten. After high school, Henry began teaching at a country school 20 miles from Charles City. Henry's father practiced medicine in Charles City and often traveled to homes in the harsh winters. One night after being out in 30 degrees below zero weather, Henry's father came home and sat down in his chair and suddenly died. After his father died, Henry's mother and uncle ran the two farms with the children's help.

Henry attended Iowa State College in Ames, but when his sister, Harriet, started college in Iowa City in 1886, Henry immediately transferred. In Iowa City, Henry attended medical school, but he transferred to Chicago Medical for his last year and graduation. Henry eventually became a physician and worked at the State Insane Asylum in Independence, Iowa. Later, he began working at a larger mental health hospital in Bloomingdale, New York.

Henry began writing articles for scientific magazines and in 1898 was asked by Harper Brothers to go to Europe and write about famous scientists. Henry also edited *Historian's History of the World* (25 Volumes) and wrote *The History of Art in Writing* in four volumes. According to his sister he wrote 120 books. He required minimal sleep and wrote his books in final form. Upon his return from Europe he specialized in hematology. In his later years he did paintings and etchings. More than 400 of his pictures were reproduced in books and magazines. He boxed and wrestled in his leisure time. Henry retired to Roxbury, Connecticut in 1914 where he studied the selection of various colors of yarn by orioles as nest

material. He moved to California in 1936 and died of natural causes there in 1943, at the age of 80.

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# Field Reports—Fall 2014

*Paul Hertzel*



*Paul Hertzel*

## WEATHER

The weather story of 2014 was the cold; unseasonable and sometimes bitter, it persisted almost throughout the year. The months of January, February, March, April, July, September and November all averaged below normal temperatures. It was Iowa's 6th coolest year on record, with the last colder year coming in 1917. This cold was undoubtedly a factor in the fall migration season.

August 2014 followed the 5th coolest July ever recorded. Initially, the cold persisted, with only one day in the first half of the month producing above-average temperatures. In the second half of August, temperatures recovered, but the cool conditions returned in September. On the 12th, daytime high temperatures remained in the forties as far south as Ringgold County, and the next morning a light frost was

scattered across much of the state. Mason City and Spencer recorded lows of 31 degrees with still a week to go before the autumnal equinox officially closed out summer. The month ended with an average 1.2 degrees below normal. The cool temperatures continued into the first part of October with the first hard freeze occurring on the 11th. But, again, temperatures improved enough later in the month to give October an average that was 0.4 degrees above normal. It was only the second month of the year (June) with an average temperature above normal, if only barely. In the last two days of October, however, the cold returned in force with another hard freeze across the state, and readings as low 19 degrees in Sheldon, and 17 degrees in Spencer. And these temperatures were indicators of what was about to happen in November. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed for 21 of the 30 days of November. In fact, for a period of time between November 11 and November 19, no temperatures above freezing were recorded anywhere in the state. The city of Des Moines broke its November record of consecutive hours below freezing – 204 hours– by 48 hours to raise the bar to 252 hours. During this cold spell, the first subzero temperatures were recorded with a -2 degrees reading at Little Sioux on the 14th, still two weeks prior to Thanksgiving. In fact, the lowest temperature for the month was -16 degrees at Swea City, occurring on Thanksgiving Day. November ended 7.5 degrees below the historical average.

Precipitation for the fall season was above average. The effects of a brief dry period

that began in July were erased in August with at least three major rain events that put August 1.82 inches above normal, and put the three summer months of 2014 into the record books as the 4th wettest in 142 years of record keeping. In September, the higher-than-normal rainfall continued over most of the state although extreme northwest Iowa could have used more. The month ended about an inch above normal. In October, precipitation occurred in a gradient from plentiful in the southeast to scarce again in the northwest. The cold temperatures did produce a trace of snow early in the month, but the real snow came in November. On November 10th up to 2 inches fell in northwestern Iowa, and five days later snow blanketed the entire state with as much as 5.5 inches in Emmet County. A third widespread snowfall, on the 26th, deposited more than 6 inches in many locations. Britt recorded a monthly total of 12.5 inches. It was the snowiest November statewide since 1991.

#### HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

Numbers of birds were down in the fall of 2014, some significantly. The peak count for Cackling Geese was 43, and for Common Loon 11. Five years ago, those two peaks were 937 and 283, respectively. There was only one report of a single Ross's Goose. Along the Mississippi River where waterfowl stage by the hundreds of thousands, many of the high counts were under their 5-year averages. A count of 80,620 Canvasbacks is a lot of birds, but that number is only 31% of the average peak over the previous five years, and a long way from the 450,000 estimated there in the fall of 2011. The Green-winged Teal and Redhead peak counts were only 30% of the averages over the last five years. The Bufflehead and Lesser Scaup peaks were 36% and 48% of their 5-year averages.

High counts of 10 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 60 Least Sandpipers and 120 Pectoral Sandpiper were way below traditional numbers. There has not been a peak fall count for Pectoral Sandpiper under 1300 in the last ten years, and the average during that time is 2777. Similarly, the smallest peak count for Least Sandpiper in the last ten years is 230, nearly four times the high count of 60 found at Cardinal Marsh this fall. There were no reports at all of Dunlin, for the first time this century. Also not reported were Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (first time since 2004), Yellow Rail (first time since 2005), and Eastern Whip-poor-will (first time since 2007).

At the Hitchcock hawk watch in Pottawattamie County, record low season totals were set for Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. The season total for raptors there was a record low by more than 2000, lower even than in the early years before they had full time counters or a high tower from which to work. Jim Meyer, veteran hawk watcher, said, "We might just as well have been standing in the middle of a cornfield this year." Not only were there fewer birds, but they rarely followed the lines of the Loess Hills ridges, instead appearing randomly across the landscape. In the center of the state, the hawk watch at Grammer Grove also posted poor totals for Northern Harriers and Cooper's, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed hawks. Mark Orsag, senior counter at Hitchcock, conjectured that frequent weak fronts and few strong southerly or southwesterly wind days interfered with usual gathering patterns. What flights did occur, were thin and "all over the sky."

The idea that finding and counting birds this fall was made difficult by weather events



scattering or accelerating movements, and perhaps initiating early departures, makes sense and was probably assisted by the persistently cool conditions and the abrupt and rather early appearance of winter. Among Iowa breeders, there were no fall records of Western Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue-winged Warbler, or Kentucky Warbler, presumably due to early departures. In the 14 years I have been compiling this report, there has never been a fall season without at least one Loggerhead Shrike and at least one Blue-winged Warbler report. Arriving statistically early from the far north were Cackling Geese, White-winged Scoter, Red-throated Loon, Red Phalarope, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Glaucous Gull. Arrivals of Winter Wren, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Lapland Longspur were all at least a week ahead of long-term median arrival dates. And at least five Snowy Owls were found in snowy November.

To add some encouraging notes, both Northern Bobwhite and Gray Partridge detection levels were up from previous years. The Hitchcock hawk watch did have a 3rd-best flight of Broad-winged Hawks, and Grammer Grove posted a 2nd-best season total for Swainson's Hawks. There were five successful nesting attempts of Barn Owl documented in the state, and Clay-colored Sparrows were found still on territory in August. Although there were many regular species not found, diversity remains strong. All three scoters plus Long-tailed Ducks had good representation, and all three regular loons were found. Another Sprague's Pipit was detected, making three years in a row in which at least one has been found, and moving the species closer to regular status. Rusty Blackbirds, a species of concern nationally, made a strong showing with flocks found in 11 counties including high counts of 190, 110 and 100. In addition, there were ten accidental and casual species found during the season.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

There were nine occurrences this fall of six species classified as accidental. A Roseate Spoonbill found by Steve Dinsmore in July stayed into August; a Swallow-tailed Kite was found by Terrie Hoefer in Guthrie County; a Parasitic Jaeger was a long-distance find at Saylorville Reservoir for Steve Dinsmore; three Long-tailed Jaegers were found by Aaron Brees and Tommy Stone; two Gyrfalcons were found, one by Mark Orsag and the other by Lee Schoenewe; and a Common Raven, the first in nine years, was found by Tyler Harms. Also documented were six occurrences of four casual species and one very rare regular species. Ray Cummins found a Red Phalarope; three Little Gulls were found by David Shealer, Susan Nixon and Jim Forde; a Rufous Hummingbird was photographed by Dennis Zuber; a Sprague's Pipit was flushed by Steve Dinsmore; and a Ferruginous Hawk was seen by Mark Orsag from the top of the hawk watch tower at Hitchcock NA.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented. County names are in *italics*. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: A = area, L = lake, M = marsh, m.ob. = many observers, NA = nature area, NM = National Monument, NWR = national wildlife refuge, P = park, R = river, RA = recreation area, Res = reservoir, SF = state forest, Sl = slough, SP = state park, USNWR = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, WPA = waterfowl production area, WA = wildlife area.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** The first 825 migrants were counted 25 Oct from the hawk watch tower at Hitchcock NC in *Pottawattamie* (MO). The most was 1208 at the same location on 4 Nov (MO). Away from the far west, the most was 50 on 30 Oct at Errington M *Polk* (RLC).

**Snow Goose:** Following six summer reports of 1–4 individuals (Dinsmore 2014), isolated sightings continued into August with 2 on 13 Aug in *Woodbury* (GLV) and 1 on 15 Aug in *Hardin* (MO). On 10 Oct, one was picked out of an overhead flock of Canada Geese in *Scott* (RAS) before an early migrant group of 34 was found on 23 Oct in *Pottawattamie* (MO). In mid-November, the hawk watchers at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* began counting them by the thousands, with a peak of 93,230 on 16 Nov (MO).

**Ross's Goose:** The only report was 1 on 22 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Cackling Goose:** The first 6 were early on 18 Sep at the NIACC ponds *Cerro Gordo* (Craig Zoellner) where numbers remained unusually low. The most in the state was a mere 43 on 25 Nov at Copper Creek L *Polk* (AB).

**Mute Swan:** Two were at Cone M *Louisa* on 29 Aug (LGR).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The most was 64 on 23 Nov along the Shellrock R *Floyd* (CJF).

**Tundra Swan:** The first 5 appeared early at Pool #9 *Allamakee* on 21 Oct (USFWS), but were soon joined by many more. By mid-Nov as many as 3,530 were at Pool #9 and another 1,140 at Pool #13 *Clinton* (BSc, WWH, USFWS).

**Wood Duck:** The most was 498 on 23 Oct at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS).

**Gadwall:** After four isolated summer reports (Dinsmore 2014), the first fall sighting of this occasional nester was a group of 5 on 4 Oct at L Hendricks *Howard* (PH). Numbers peaked along the Mississippi R

on 10 Nov when USFWS aerial surveys estimated 27,855 at Pool #13 *Clinton*. In the interior of the state, the most was 548 on 9 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**American Wigeon:** The first few were 1 on 3 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) followed by 2 on 4 Oct at L Hendricks *Howard* (PH). The high count was 1,765 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* on 15 Oct (USFWS), and about 1,000 were still on the river 10 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton*.

**American Black Duck:** The first were early, on 7 Oct at Pool #9 *Allamakee*, and the most was 50 on 25 Nov at Pool #12 *Clinton* (USFWS aerial surveys). Away from the river, singles were found in Nov in *Polk*, *Hardin*, *Cerro Gordo*, and *Marshall* (DCH, MP, BVL, AB).

**Blue-winged Teal:** On 5 Sep, GLV estimated 5,000 at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury*. There were still 1,655 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* on 8 Oct, where the last 66 were recorded 29 Oct (USFWS).

**Northern Shoveler:** The largest concentrations were at Pool #13 *Clinton* where 1,000–1,725 were counted 15 Oct–20 Nov (USFWS).

**Northern Pintail:** The first 2 were at Terry Trueblood *Johnson* 14 Sep (MHB) and 162 were counted on 24 Sep at Green Island *Jackson* (KMc). Between 1,000 and 1,100 remained at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 8 Oct–6 Nov (USFWS). The peak count was 3,895 on 22 Oct at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS).

**Green-winged Teal:** The first 4 were at Ada Hayden P *Story* 11 Aug (WO). Peaked in the east on 27 Oct when 2,160 were counted at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS), and in the west on 6 Nov when 5,672 were counted at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS).

**Canvasback:** The first 4 were at L Hendricks *Howard* on 4 Oct (PH). By 7 Oct, 340 were at Pool #9 *Allamakee* where 80,620 were counted on 29 Oct (USFWS).

**Redhead:** High counts were 260 on 22 Oct at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS), 200 on 9 Nov at Spirit L *Dickinson* (MHB), and 142 on 27 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Peaked along the Mississippi R at Pool #13 *Clinton* on 3 Nov when 5,300 were counted by USFWS aerial survey.

**Greater Scaup:** The only report was 5 on 23 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC-details).

**Lesser Scaup:** Suddenly appeared in three central Iowa counties on 14 Oct, and along the Mississippi R the next day (RLC, WO, TMH, USFWS). The peak count was 27,855 at Pool #13 *Clinton* on 10 Nov (USFWS).

**Surf Scoter:** All: 1 on 4 Oct at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD), 1 on 9 Oct at Mike Zack WA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL, RG), 1–2 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14 Oct–9 Nov (RLC, AB), 1 on 15 Oct at Gray's L *Polk* (JG, AB, RIA, PHA), 1 on 27 Oct at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 1 on 3 Nov at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF). All were immatures or females.

**White-winged Scoter:** There were as many as 18 individuals at 4 locations: 1 on 8 Oct at Crystal Hills WMA *Hancock* was 2nd-earliest (Brad Mohr *fide* KTM), 3 on 14 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* and 2 more there on 12 Nov (THM, WO), 1–2 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9–18 Nov (AB, JG, JB, RLC), and 11 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 9–16 Nov (JF, TGS).

**Black Scoter:** There were 9 individuals found at 4 locations: 2 on 6 Nov at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF, JLF, RJH), 1–5 at W Okoboji L *Dickinson* 17–22 Nov (ET, LAS), 1 on 22 Nov at Brushy Creek *Webster* (SJD), and 1 on 28 Nov at Lindsay P *Scott* (JF).

**Long-tailed Duck:** All: 1 on 13 Nov at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), 1 on 16 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* and 3 there on 28 Nov (TGS, AB), and 1 on 22 Nov on the Mississippi R *Scott* (JF). All were juveniles or females.

**Bufflehead:** First found 14 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* and Ada Hayden P *Story* (RLC, WO). Between 1,400 and 2,200 were at Pool #9 *Allamakee* 29 Oct–5 Nov and 1,800–2,000 at Pool #13 *Clinton* 27 Oct–10 Nov (USFWS). Away from the big river, as many as 119 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 11–14 Nov (AB, RLC).

**Common Goldeneye:** First appeared along the Mississippi R 29 Oct (USFWS). High counts were 1,170 on 5 Nov at Pool #9 *Allamakee*, 8,540 on 25 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton*, and 1,100 on 28 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* (USFWS, AB).

**Hooded Merganser:** Numbers peaked at Saylorville *Polk* 10–15 Nov when up to 235 were counted on the lake (JG, AB, DTH, RLC).

**Common Merganser:** A single male at Jester P *Polk* 17 Aug (RLC) may have spent the summer in the area. The first returning migrants were found 30 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC). Peak counts were 5,100 on 28 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 630 in the west at Okoboji L *Dickinson* on 30 Nov (LAS).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** All: 3–56 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 31 Oct–13 Nov (RLC, JG), 2 on 18 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 2 on 28 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB).

**Ruddy Duck:** Apparently nested at Trumbull L *Clay* where a female with 5 young was found 7 Sep (LAS). The first migrants were found 2 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Peaked along the Mississippi R on 15 Oct when 3,650 were estimated at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS aerial survey). Away from the river, high counts were 310 at Saylorville *Polk* 27 Nov and 50 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* on 1 Nov (AB, PH).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Although numbers remain below the long term average, 2014 DNR August Roadside Survey counts

were up 61% from the the 10-year average. The highest detections occurred in *Adams*, *Taylor*, *Davis*, *Appanoose* and *Lucas* all in the southern two tiers of counties.

**Gray Partridge:** A pair with 11 young were in northern *Floyd* on 5 Aug (PH). Also reported from *Howard*, *Story*, *Boone* and *Polk* (WO, LR, AB). DNR August Roadside Surveys resulted in 2.3 birds per 30-mile route, the highest index since 2005.

**Ruffed Grouse:** No reports.

**Red-throated Loon:** Two juveniles at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 11 Oct tied the 3rd-earliest date (SJD-details, AB-details, TMH). Later reports of one or possibly two at Red Rock Res *Marion* may have been these same birds.

**Pacific Loon:** A single juvenile lingered at Saylorville Res *Polk* 1–5 Nov (AB-photo, SJD, JG, JB, DCH).

**Common Loon:** The first was 1 on 13 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC). The high counts were very low with 11 on 27 Oct at Saylorville (RLC), 8 on 5 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton* (JF), and 6 on 1 Nov at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). The last 2 were at Saylorville 6–15 Nov (MHB, RLC).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Adults with small young were still being found in August at Cardinal M *Winneshieck* (LR) and Errington M *Polk* (BE), and in September at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS). The largest migrant concentration was 72 on 27 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Horned Grebe:** On 3 Oct, the first migrants were found at Cedar L *Linn* and Ada Hayden P *Story* (JF, WO). Also reported at Saylorville Res *Polk*, Spirit L *Dickinson*, Clear L *Cerro Gordo*, Hendrickson M *Story*, Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson*, and Red Rock Res *Marion* (m.ob). The most was 36 on 27 Oct at Saylorville (AB).

**Red-necked Grebe:** The only report was 1 on 5 Oct at Red Rock Res *Marion* (TGS).

**Eared Grebe:** Two were at Red Rock Res *Marion* 6–8 Sep (JF, TGS), another was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 27 Oct (DTh), and the last was at W Okoboji L *Dickinson* on 19 Nov (ET).

**Western Grebe:** All: 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 31 Oct (RLC), 2 at Pool #13 *Clinton* on 5 Nov (JF), and 1 at Ada Hayden P *Story* on 14 Nov (WO).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Although this species successfully bred on the Mississippi R in eastern Iowa (Dinsmore 2014), the most was a flight of 2,247 past Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* on 3 Oct (MO).

**American White Pelican:** The steady stream of migrants peaked at 9,200 on 31 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE, AB). Another 1,400 were counted from one location at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* on 14 Aug (MHB). On 30 Nov, the last day of the season, in a hole in the ice on E Okoboji L *Dickinson*, a single lost individual had only geese for company (LAS).

**American Bittern:** From 1–3 were at Errington WMA *Polk* on 11 Oct (TMH, AB), 1 was at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* 13 Oct (CJF, BVL), 1 was at Ada Hayden P *Story* 14 Oct and again on 7 Nov (WO), and 1 flushed from dry grass at Colo Ponds *Story* on 20 Oct (BSc).

**Least Bittern:** One at Cardinal M *Winneshieck* on 5 Aug was the first there in many years for LR. Another was at Errington M *Polk* 10 Aug (BE) and as many as 7 surprised the observers at Otter Creek M *Tama* on 13 Aug (LGR, BSc).

**Great Egret:** Some high counts were 80 on 14 Aug at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB), 54 on 17 Sep at Jester P *Polk* (DTh), 26 on 3 Oct at Sedan *Appanoose* (RLC), and 17 on 18 Oct at Little Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS). The last was 5 on 4 Nov at Amana Lily Pond *Iowa* (LGR).

**Snowy Egret:** Two at Frazer's Bend



Wild Turkey, Iowa City, Johnson, 14 November 2014. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.



Turkey Vulture, Saylorville Res, Polk, 28 September 2014. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.

in Fremont during the summer (Dinsmore 2014) were present through 30 Aug (Ryan Ubias *vide* SJD). Two others were at Deere Dike Dubuque on 16–25 Oct (DAS-photo), a record late date.

**Little Blue Heron:** No reports.

**Cattle Egret:** One was at Errington M Polk 25 Oct (AB).

**Green Heron:** The last was 1 on 9 Oct at Credit Island P Scott (RAS).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** The last was 1 on 24 Aug at Chichaqua Polk (DTh).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** No reports.

**White-faced Ibis:** The last identified to species was 1 on 6 Oct at Chain-O-Lakes Linn (JF).

**Plegadis species:** Eight ibis were at Luton WMA Woodbury on 11 Sep (GLV). The last was a juvenile at Fisher L Polk on 11 Oct (Scott Rolles *vide* SJD).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL:** A juvenile found at Copeland Bend Fremont in July was last seen 5 Aug (SJD).

**Turkey Vulture:** On 4 Aug, one fledged from the same hollow tree in Lake Meyer County Park Winneshiek that has been in use for about 10 years (LR). The most was 140

on 13 Sep at Coralville L Johnson where the last was found on 6 Nov (MHB, LGR).

**Osprey:** The season total of 61 at the Hitchcock hawk watch Pottawattamie was the lowest since the hawk watch began in 2002 (MO). Away from hawk watches, only 6 individuals were reported, with the last 1 on 4 Nov at Cedar Rapids Linn (BSc).

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE:** An adult found 31 Aug near Stuart Guthrie (\*Terrie Hoefler) makes two records in the last three years of this accidental species.

**Mississippi Kite:** An adult with a recent fledgling was photographed on 30 Aug near the Memorial Park water tower in Ottumwa Wapello (Sid Kooyman *vide* BEh). All others: an adult on 23 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), 1 on 23 Aug at Ashworth P Polk (MP), 1 on 19 Sep at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (MO), and 1 on 20 Sep at Grammer Grove Marshall (MP).

**Bald Eagle:** The total of 562 at the Grammer Grove hawk watch Marshall in the east was the 2nd-highest total in 25 years (MP), but was in contrast to a 2nd-lowest total at the Hitchcock hawk watch Pottawattamie (MO) in the west.

**Northern Harrier:** The season total of

70 at Hitchcock hawk watch *Pottawattamie* was not only a record low, it was less than half of the previous record low of 156 set in 2002 (MO). Elsewhere, 1–3 were seen in 11 counties primarily in central Iowa.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The first was 1 on 3 Aug at Lylah's M Howard (PH). The flight was strong at Grammer Grove Marshall, where MP had 85 on 4 Oct and 134 in the two-day period 4–5 Oct. In the west, at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie*, the flight was the poorest on record (MO).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Following a record high season total of 376 in 2013, the Hitchcock NA hawk watch *Pottawattamie* set a record low season total of 164 in 2014 (MO). Elsewhere, there were scattered reports of 1 or 2 from seven counties.

**Northern Goshawk:** The first was 1 on 24 Sep in rural Jackson (KMc). The first of 4 at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* was picked out of the sky on 10 Oct (MO). There were three others: 1 on 10 Oct near Booneville Dallas (DCH), 1 on 16 Nov at Grammer Grove Marshall (MP), and 1 on 29 Nov at Waterman Creek O'Brien (AB).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Unusual sightings were 1 found by BVL 22 Aug at Lime Creek NC *Cerro Gordo* which stayed at least until 20 Sep (RG, CJF) and 2 for the season at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* in the far west (MO). There were four other reports at expected locations in the east.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** MHB estimated at least 1,400 in steady southbound flight at Terry Trueblood RA Johnson on 14 Sep. High counts at the hawk watches were 222 at Grammer Grove Marshall on 21 Sep, and 386 at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* on 22 Sep (MP, MO). The last was a single bird on 6 Oct at Hitchcock (MO).

**Swainson's Hawk:** The high count was 320 at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* on 3 Oct, the same day the high count of 15

occurred at Grammer Grove Marshall and 4 others were counted at Waterworks P Polk (MO, MP, JB). Elsewhere, 1 was at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* 4 Oct (TGS) and 1 was in rural Boone on 9 Oct (DCH). The last was 2 on 20 Oct at Hitchcock (MO).

**FERRUGINOUS HAWK:** A dark morph juvenile was seen at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* 4 Nov (\*MO).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** The first report was 2 at the Mason City airport *Cerro Gordo* on 4 Nov (BVL). Five were observed on a single day twice, once on 16 Nov in Howard (LR) and again on 21 Nov in Winneshiek (DC).

**Golden Eagle:** The first was 1 on 7 Oct at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* where the hawk watch counted 19 for the season (MO). In the rest of the state, 8 were found in November in Allamakee, Marshall, Polk and Johnson (BSc, MP, AB, JLF).

**Yellow Rail:** No reports.

**Virginia Rail:** The last 2 were at Harrier Marsh Boone on 8 Oct (DCH).

**Sora:** The most was 9 on 13 Sep near Voas Nature Center Dallas (RLC). Other reports were steady in the east and central through early October, with the last 2 on 13 Oct at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Common Gallinule:** As many as 20 adults and juveniles were at Green Island Jackson on 17–28 Aug (DP, CLW). Elsewhere, 4 juveniles were at Errington M Polk on 10 Aug (BE) and 3 were at Trumbull L Clay 1 Sep (LAS). The last was 1 still at Green Island 24 Sep (KMc).

**American Coot:** At Pool #13 Clinton, USFWS aerial surveys estimated 56,350 on 27 Oct. In the interior of the state, the most was 9,800 at Saylorville Res Polk on 25 Oct (AB).

**Sandhill Crane:** Up to 7 adults and juveniles were at Cardinal M Winneshiek 1–13 Aug (DC, LR), one at Buffalo Creek Dela-

ware on 1 Aug was a first county record for BSc, 1–4 were at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* 2 Aug–27 Sep (JF, JLF, CRE), 4 were at Lylah's M *Howard* on 3 Aug (PH), 2 were at Pool Sl *Allamakee* 17 Aug (LR), 2 were at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* on 7 Sep (LAS), 13 were at Otter Creek M *Tama* 3 Nov (JF), and 2 were in a pasture north of Mason City *Cerro Gordo* through 15 Nov (BLV, RG).

**American Avocet:** Up to 15 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 22 Aug–20 Sep (JB, DTh, RLC, KVS, AB, JB), 1–6 were at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* 22 Aug–4 Oct (JF, MHB, CRE), and 1–3 were found in *Boone*, *Fremont* and *Palo Alto* in late Aug and early Sep (WO, SJD, LAS). The last were 2 on 16 Oct at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS) and 2 on 25 Oct at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD, TMH).

**Black-bellied Plover:** The first report was 4 on 28 Aug at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB). The only other report was 1 or 2 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 13–27 Sep (KVS, SCS).

**American Golden-Plover:** All: 1 on 11 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh), 15 on 23 Aug at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB), 23 on 29 Aug in rural *Hardin* (MP), 5 on 11 Oct at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (GLV), and 85 on 11 Oct in rural *Polk* (TMH).

**Semipalmated Plover:** There were very few reports of very few birds. From 1–3 were found at three locations in August: Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC, LR), Lylah's M *Howard* (PH), and Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh, RLC, JB). The last was 1 on 28 Sep at Saylorville (AB).

**Piping Plover:** One was at Oak Grove Access at Saylorville Res *Polk* 11 Aug (JG, JB, RIA, PHA, DTh).

**Killdeer:** The most was 200 at Lylah's M *Howard* on 3 Aug after peaking there in July (PH).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** The last was 1 on 12 Oct at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Reported in small

numbers in August from six scattered locations in central and eastern Iowa. The most was 6 on 17 Aug at Runnells *Polk* (KVS) and the last was 1 on 28 Aug at Green Island *Jackson* (CLW).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** The most was 8 on 24 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh) and the last was 1 on 5 Nov at Hurstville M *Jackson* (BRM).

**Willet:** There were three isolated eastern reports of this Great Plains breeder: 1 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 16 Aug, 1 at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* on 26 Aug, and 1 at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* on 28 Aug (AB, JB, TNJ, JF).

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** The most was 74 on 6 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and the last was 10 on 3 Oct at Sedan *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Upland Sandpiper:** After multiple summer reports from 12 counties (Dinsmore 2014), only 3 could be found in early fall. Two were at Sand Point *Johnson* on 21 Aug (JF) and 1 was at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 22 Aug (DTh).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Up to 38 were at Sand Point *Johnson* 22–30 Aug (JF).

**Marbled Godwit:** A lone individual was at Sand Point *Johnson* along with 18 Hudsonian Godwits on 30 Aug (JF).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** The first was 1 on 10 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Others were 2 were at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* 16 Aug (PH, BLV, CJF), 1 was at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* 26 Aug (TNJ), and 1–3 at Jester Park *Polk* 23–31 Aug (JB, BE). The last was at Oak Grove Access *Polk* 27 Sep (KVS).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Reported at Lylah's M *Howard*, Saylorville Res *Polk*, Runnells Overlook Warren, Hawkeye WA *Johnson*, and Sandhill L *Woodbury* (m.ob). The most was 88 on 6 Sep at Saylorville (AB) and the last was 40 on 11 Oct at Sandhill L (GLV).

**Sanderling:** At least 3 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 19–30 Aug, and then again on



*Ruddy Turnstone, Saylorville Res, Polk, 7 August 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Stilt Sandpiper, Saylorville Res, Polk, 30 August 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

1 Oct (JF). From 1–7 were at Saylorville Res Polk 23 Aug–18 Oct (m.ob) and 2 were at Red Rock Res Marion 16 Oct (JF).

**Dunlin:** No reports. In the 14 years I have been writing this report, Dunlin has never failed to be reported. Over that time, the median arrival date is 3 Oct and the median departure date is 13 Nov with the latest record 29 Nov (2012). The mean high count is 27.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** The only reports came from Polk where 1–4 were at Saylorville Res 15–29 Aug (RLC, JB, DTh).

**Least Sandpiper:** The most was a mere 60 at Cardinal M Winneshiek 4 Aug (LR). Also reported from Lylah's M Howard (PH), Saylorville Res Polk (RLC), rural Polk (JB), and the last 1 on 11 Oct at Cedar L Linn (BT).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** One was found in rural Polk 11 Oct (RLC-details).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Reported from only three locations: 1–6 at Saylorville

Res Polk 6 Aug–1 Sep (m.ob), 1 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 21 Aug (JF), and 4 at a sod farm north of Spencer Clay 7 Sep (LAS).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** There were no large groups found. The high count was 120 on 26 Aug at Jester P Polk (RLC). The last was 1 on 28 Aug at Green Island Jackson (CLW).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** After high counts in the hundreds during late summer (Dinsmore 2014), the most in fall was a mere 10 at Cardinal M Winneshiek on 4 Aug (LR). The last was 1 on 2 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (AB).

**Western Sandpiper:** There were two reports with substantiation: a juvenile at Saylorville Res Polk 16, 17 Aug (SJD-photo, AB-photo, JG-details, JB-details, RLC-details) and 1 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 17 Aug (LGR-details).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** All: 1 on 12 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC), 3 on 28 Aug at Green Island Jackson (CLW), 3 at





*Sanderling, Saylorville Res, Polk, 7 August 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Least Sandpiper, Saylorville Res, Polk, 14 August 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

Jester P *Polk* on 5 Sep (RLC), and 1 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 3 Oct (JF-photo), which was record late by about a week.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Only two reports: 17 on 3 Oct at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 50 on 23 Oct at Amana Lily L *Iowa* (JF).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Reported from *Allamakee, Hamilton, Jackson, Johnson, Polk* and *Warren*. The high count was 37 on 29 Oct in rural *Polk* (TMH).

**American Woodcock:** The only report was 1 on 7 Sep at Wickiup Hill *Linn* (BSc).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** All: 1 on 2 Aug in rural *Polk* (RLC), 2 on 30 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 3 on 30 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** The first was in July (Dinsmore 2014). Fall birds were scattered across eight locations in eastern and central Iowa. Some high counts were up to 11 during 15–26 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, MHB, JLF), 4 on 20 Aug at Ocheyedan Sewage ponds *Osceola* (JJD), and 6 on 31 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk*

(MHB). The last was 3 on 13 Sep at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**RED PHALAROPE:** A basic adult was photographed at Saylorville Res *Polk* 29–30 Aug, a 3rd-earliest date (\*RLC, \*MHB, \*AB).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:** A juvenile dark morph was seen briefly at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 1 Nov (\*SJD)

**LONG-TAILED JAEGER:** Two dark juveniles were photographed at Red Rock Res *Marion* 31 Aug–1 Sep (\*AB, \*AMJ, \*TMH, \*BC, \*CRE), and a single lighter juvenile appeared there 5–9 Oct (\*TGS, JF).

**Sabine's Gull:** All: 2 juveniles along the Mississippi R at Bettendorf 14 Sep (Susan Nixon), a juvenile at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 20 Sep (MHB), an adult at Red Rock Res *Marion* 21 Sep (TGS), and 1 adult with 2 juveniles at Saylorville Res *Polk* 24–27 Sep (JB, JG, AB).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first two arrived in late July (Dinsmore 2014) and were followed by three individuals in August (AB, JB, LGR, MHB, AMJ). The first group was



*Semipalmated Sandpiper, Saylorville Res, Polk, 30 August 2014. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Red Phalarope, Saylorville Res, Polk, 30 August 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

15 on 5 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (LGD). The peak was in mid-Nov with up to 560 at Saylorville on 15 Nov (AB, RLC).

**LITTLE GULL:** There were 3 records this fall: a juvenile was photographed 9 Aug along the Mississippi R in *Dubuque* (\*DAS), an adult was found 7 Sep along the Mississippi R in *Scott* (\*Susan Nixon), and a 2nd juvenile was photographed 17-18 Oct at L Macbride Johnson (\*JF, \*Susan Nixon).

**Laughing Gull:** A juvenile was at Red Rock Res Marion 6-9 Sep (MHB-photo, TGS, RIA, PHA, JG) and what may have been the same individual there on 16-19 Oct (AB-photo, JF), a 3rd-latest date.

**Franklin's Gull:** Peaked at Saylorville Res Polk on 8 Oct when RLC estimated 16,000 were present. By November, most were gone, but singles were still being reported as late as 27 Nov Polk (RLC, AB).

**Herring Gull:** There were isolated reports of 1 or 2 until numbers began to increase along the Des Moines R in late November. Peak numbers were 570 at Say-

lorville Res Polk 27 Nov and 621 at Red Rock Res Marion on 28 Nov (AB).

**Thayer's Gull:** There were seven reports of this rare but regular gull, all in November. The first was at Red Rock Res Marion on 10 Nov (JF). The others all occurred in the last ten days of the month: an adult on the Des Moines R in Des Moines (AB, JB), a 2nd winter individual at W Okoboji L Dickinson (LAS), an adult at Red Rock Res Marion (AB), an adult and a juvenile at Saylorville Res Polk (JG, AB), and 1 along the Mississippi R in *Scott* (JF).

**Iceland Gull:** An adult was at Saylorville Res Polk 21 Nov (SJD), a 2nd-earliest date.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** An adult at W Okoboji L Dickinson 23-29 Sep was 2nd-earliest in this century (ET, LAS). There were two others: 1 on 12-16 Oct at Red Rock Res Marion (TGS, JF) and an adult at Saylorville Res Polk 29 Nov (AB).

**Glaucous Gull:** One at Cedar L Linn on 12 Nov tied the fourth-earliest date (JF). A



*Least Tern, Frazer's Bend, Fremont, 5 August 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Common Tern, Saylorville Res, Polk, 10 September 2014. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*



*Forster's Tern, Saylorville Res, Polk, 10 September 2014. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*

second report was of an adult at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 28 Nov (SJD).

**Least Tern:** The only report was a juvenile on 22 Aug at Jester P *Polk* (TGS).

**Caspian Tern:** In August, 7 were at Saylorville Res *Polk*, 1 was at Union Hills *Cerro Gordo*, and 6 were at Ada Hayden P *Story* (JG, JB, BVL, PH, WO). Encounters increased in September with high counts of 42 on 2 Sep at Sand Lake *Marshall* (MP) and 40 on 5 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh). The last 2 were at Cedar L *Linn* on 7 Oct (BT).

**Black Tern:** Some high counts were 30 on 18 Aug at Sand Point *Johnson* (LGR), 75 on 22 Aug at Oak Grove Access *Polk* (JB), and 42 on 1 Sep at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

The last 2 were at Upper Coralville Res *Johnson* on 20 Sep (DP).

**Common Tern:** All: From 1–3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* during 30 Aug–28 Sep (MHB, AB, RLC, JG).

**Forster's Tern:** Up to 6 were at Ada Hayden P *Story* 3–28 Aug (WO), 1 was at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* 4 Aug (LR), 5 were at Sand Lake WA *Marshall* on 25 Aug (MP), 1 at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 1 Sep (TMH), and 12 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 1 Sep (PH). All others were at Saylorville Res *Polk*, peaking there on 26 Aug when DTh counted 56 and then trailing off to the last 1 on 14 Oct (AB).

**White-winged Dove:** No reports.



*American White Pelicans, Saylorville Res, Polk, 26 August 2014. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.*



*Eastern Screech-Owl, Boone, 19 October 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Barn Owl, Story, 1 September 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird at nest, Des Moines, Polk, 10 August 2014. Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Philadelphia Vireo, Boone, 13 September 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Marsh Wren, Bjorkboda M, Hamilton, 19 August 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Snow Bunting, Spirit L, Dickinson, 7 November 2014. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Common Nighthawk, Dallas, 19 September 2014. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Ames, Story, 8 November 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** From 1–4 were reported in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clinton*, *Dallas*, *Des Moines*, *Dubuque*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (m.ob.). The last was 1 on 26 Sep at *Sugar Bottom Johnson* (DP).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** The only two reports were 1 on 21 Aug at *Bacon Creek P Woodbury* (GLV-details) and 1 on 26 Sep at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Barn Owl:** Five successful nesting attempts were recorded with young fledging in September in *Story*, October in *Guthrie* and *Jefferson*, and November in *Lucas* (Sheila Doser fide SJD, BEh, BRO). Structures used included a metal grain bin, a corncrib, a deer blind, and a tree cavity.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** This common, but rarely detected owl was confirmed in *Boone*, *Kossuth*, *Lee*, *Marshall*, *Muscatine*, and *Polk* (LGD, MCK, JWR, MP, KMc, DTh).

**Snowy Owl:** There were five reports in November: An adult, possibly a female, was photographed 15 Nov east of *Oelwein Fayette* (Jim Moreland fide SJD), one was NE of *Manly Worth* 28 Nov (Margie Kline fide Craig Zoellner), an adult was photographed south of *Woden Hancock* 29 Nov (Paul Hul-

ing), a juvenile female was photographed near *Prairie City Jasper* 29 Nov (Lynn Cabbage), and one was seen in flight northwest of *Cedar Falls Black Hawk* 30 Nov (John Henderson).

**Long-eared Owl:** The first was 1 on 30 Oct at *Moorehead P Ida* (DoP), followed by singles in *Cerro Gordo* on 9 Nov at both *Ventura M* and along the *Shellrock Green Belt* (RG, BVL).

**Short-eared Owl:** There were two late Nov reports: 1 on 25 Nov at *Neal Smith NWR Jasper* (KVS) and 1 chased by crows near *Algona Kossuth* on 26 Nov (MCK).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** At the Hitchcock banding station in *Pottawattamie*, the first of 38 captures occurred 10 Oct (JT); another 10 were banded in *Ringgold* and *Harrison* (Veronica Mecko fide JT). Away from the banding stations, there were two reports: 1 on 15 Nov at *Grammer Grove Marshall* (MP) and 1 on 29 Nov at *Moorehead P Ida* (DoP).

**Common Nighthawk:** The largest movement reported was a mere 47 birds on 30 Aug over *Cardinal M Winneshiek* (LR). Last was 2 on 29 Sep in *Cedar Rapids Linn* (BT).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** No reports.

**Chimney Swift:** The most was an estimated 1,500 entering a chimney at Drake U in Des Moines on 16 Sep (SCS). Also of note, 200 in downtown Burlington 13 Aug (JJD) and 155 at Washington Township School Dallas 31 Aug (KG). The last was 40 on 8 Oct at Waterworks P Polk (JB).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** There were six early October reports with the last on 14 Oct in Saylorville Polk (AB). Then, three weeks later, on 7 Nov, a very late juvenile female appeared at a feeder in Ames, where it persisted until 12 Nov and then probably perished (SJD-photo).

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD:** An adult male was photographed attending a feeder in Homestead Iowa 5 Sep (Dennis Zuber-photo *fide* \*CJB).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** The peak flight in the west was 1 Sep when 232 were counted at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (MO).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** First appeared in late Sep in Hardin and Polk (MP, KVS, WO). The most was 13 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP Muscatine (KMc).

**Northern Flicker:** A red-shafted individual was found 6 Oct at Bacon Creek P Woodbury (GLV).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reported from 11 expected locations in eastern and central Iowa. The most was 12 during a visit to Huron Island Des Moines on 11 Sep (KMc)

**American Kestrel:** After rebounding in 2013 from an all-time low in 2012, the Hitchcock season total was another new record low. Hawk watchers counted only 69 individuals, nine fewer than in 2012 (MO). At Grammer Grove, the 26 counted was about average (MP).

**Merlin:** There were 13 reports with first a *columbarius* in Algona on 12 Sep (MCK). The first noticed at the traditional



*Downy Woodpecker, North Liberty, Johnson, 1 November 2014. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

winter roost in Des Moines was an adult female on 5 Nov (DCH).

**GYRFALCON:** A gray-morph juvenile was spotted from the Hitchcock Pottawattamie hawk watch tower 11 Nov (\*MO) and a second gray-morph juvenile was flushed from a cedar grove in rural O'Brien on 16 Nov (\*LAS). These are the first Iowa records for the month of November, and there is only one earlier record for the fall season, on 25 Sep 1993 (Silcock 1994).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Reports were steady with 1 or 2 per week until late October. At the Hitchcock hawk watch Pottawattamie, the season total of 30 was a new record low count (MO).

**Prairie Falcon:** The only report was 1 on 28 Oct at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (MO).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** The first was found in the far north on 9 Aug at Ochee Yahola Worth (RG). Also reported from *Cerro Gordo*, *Dallas*, *Howard*, *Jasper*, *O'Brien*, *Osceola*, *Polk*, *Pottawattamie*, and *Woodbury* (m.ob.). The last was 1 at L Hendricks *Howard* on 21 Sep (PH).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** The most was 26 on 8 Sep at Huron Island *Des Moines* (KMc). The last was 1 on 27 Sep at Chichaqua Greenbelt *Polk* (WO).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** The first few were 1 on 13 Aug at Otter Creek M *Tama* (BSc) and 2 on 24 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB, RLC). The last was 1 on 6 Sep at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Four vocal birds were at Backbone SP *Delaware* 1 Aug (BSc). The last was 1 at Ashworth P *Polk* on 23 Aug (MP).

**Alder Flycatcher:** The only report was 1 on 22 Aug identified by voice at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB).

**Willow Flycatcher:** The last was 1 on 24 Aug at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (RLC).

**Least Flycatcher:** The last one calling was 1 on 14 Aug in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Eastern Phoebe:** The most was 10 on 24 Sep in rural *Jackson* (KMc). The last two were at Coralville Res *Johnson* on 6 Nov (JLF) and Decorah *Winneshiek* 19 Nov (Rose Weigel *fide* DC), which tied a 2nd-latest date for the fall season. There are handful of December records.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** The last was 1 on 15 Sep at Pleasant Creek WA *Jackson* (KMc).

**Western Kingbird:** No reports.

**Eastern Kingbird:** The most was a mere 8 on 21 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC). The last was 2 on 20 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** A juvenile was seen along Highway 169 just west of Badger Creek *Madison* on 30 Sep (\*SB).



*Eastern Kingbird, Madison, 4 August 2014. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.*

**Loggerhead Shrike:** No reports

**Northern Shrike:** The first of ten reports was a vocalizing adult at Saylorville Res *Polk* 23 Oct (SJD). Also reported from *Dallas*, *Dickinson*, *Johnson*, *Mahaska*, *O'Brien*, *Story*, *Winneshiek*, and *Woodbury*.

**Bell's Vireo:** Reported from *Johnson*, *Jasper*, *Polk* and *Dallas* (LGR, KVS, JB, MHB). The last was 2 on 3 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** The most was 15 as part of huge fallout at Ledges SP *Boone* 2 Sep (DCH). The last was 1 on 27 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (WO).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The first was 1 on 8 Sep at Waterworks P *Polk* (JB) and the last was 1 on 10 Oct in rural *Louisa* (KMc).

**Warbling Vireo:** KMc counted 25 on 8 Sep during an outing to Huron Island *Des Moines*, the peak report. The last was 2 on 24 Sep in rural *Jackson* (KMc).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** One at Ada Hayden P *Story* on 29 Aug was the first (WO). The peak movement was 12–13 Sep when 8 of the season's 15 reports occurred, all in central Iowa (KVS, LGD, JB, MHB).





*Red-eyed Vireo, Boone, 13 September 2014.*  
*Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA*

The last was 1 on 24 Sep at Green Island *Jackson* (KMc).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** DCH counted at least 50 as part of a huge fallout at Ledges SP *Boone* 2 Sep. The last 2 were on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine*, and in rural *Louisa* (KMc).

**Blue Jay:** Peak movements occurred 20–30 Oct at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* when 3,607 were counted (MO).

**COMMON RAVEN:** Iowa's second record since 2000 was found 8 Nov at the Big Creek spillway of Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*TMH). It was not seen again until 23 Nov when birders encountered it at the Sandpiper Access to Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD, \*RLC, \*RIA, \*JB, \*AB). It was last seen 25 Nov (AMJ, JLF).

**Purple Martin:** The last were two September reports at Saylorville Res *Polk*: 2 on 13 Sep and 2 on 17 Sep (AB, DTh).

**Tree Swallow:** The most was 1,528 on 13 Sep in *Clinton* (KMc), which was the smallest high count since 2004. The last was 1 on 3 Nov at Heron Bend *Lee* (JLF).

**Northern Rough-winged Swal-**

**low:** The last was 12 on 10 Oct in *Louisa* (KMc).

**Bank Swallow:** Up to 60 were counted 6 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC). The last was a single bird at Ada Hayden P *Story* 8 Oct (WO), a 2nd-latest date.

**Cliff Swallow:** The most was 285 on 15 Sep at Davenport (KMc) and the last was 2 on 24 Sep at Green Island *Jackson* (KMc).

**Barn Swallow:** The last was getting late on 3 Nov at Fort Madison (JLF).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** One was at Red Rock Res *Marion* 7 Sep (TGS) and 1 or 2 were found twice in Nevada *Story* during Nov (MP, WO).

**Brown Creeper:** Not reported since 10 May (Harms 2014), the first was encountered by me on my birthday, 4 Oct, at L Hendricks *Howard* (PH). Nine reports of 1 or 2 followed in steady fashion through mid-Nov.

**Carolina Wren:** All: 2 on 9 Aug at Stone SP *Woodbury* (\*Andrew Krenz), another the same day in Johnston *Polk* (DTh), 1 along the Trestle to Trestle Trail in Des Moines on 14 Sep (KVS), and 6 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc).

**House Wren:** The last two were on 8 Oct and 10 Oct in *Story* and *Muscatine* (WO, KMc).

**Winter Wren:** One on 3 Sep in Mason City was the earliest since 1993 (BVL-details). The median arrival date over the last 25 years is 21 Sep. The most was 6 on 11 Oct at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP).

**Sedge Wren:** As many as 35 were counted 10 Aug at Errington M *Polk* (BE) where the last 3 lingered until at least 11 Oct (TMH).

**Marsh Wren:** As many as 10 were counted at Pintail Wetlands *Hardin* 27 Sep (MP). The last was 2 at Anderson L *Hamilton* 25 Oct (TMH).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The only two

reports were of single birds on 23 Aug at Waterworks P *Polk*, and 14 Sep at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MP, MHB).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Found statewide in small numbers starting with 1 on 4 Oct in Urbandale (BE), except for a report of 59 at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* on 10 Oct (KMc). The last four reports were from 2, 3, 6, and 15 Nov (TMH, JWR, MHB, KMc).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** The first was 1 on 7 Sep at Mines of Spain SP *Dubuque* (DAS).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** Found in fall 10 of the last 16 years with a median arrival of 18 Oct, one was along 470th near Waterman Prairie O'Brien on 9 Oct (LAS).

**Veery:** Usually gone by late September, this species was found twice: 1 on 13 Sep at Grammer Grove Marshall (MP) and 1 on 24 Sep in Jackson (KMc).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** There were four reports of 1–5 spanning 10–24 Sep from Clinton, Jackson, Johnson and Polk (RLC, KMc, WWH).

**Swainson's Thrush:** Usually found in September, migrants showed up on time with 2 on 1 Sep at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (DP), followed by seven more reports through 24 Sep. Then, after a 38-day gap, one was photographed at Coralville Dam *Johnson* on 1 Nov (LGR-photo). Two weeks later, on 15 Nov, the last two appeared at Black Hawk WMA *Allamakee* during an Iowa Young Birders field trip (THM-details, WWH-details, BSc-details), which was a record late date for the fall season. There is one December record from 2009 (Brees 2010).

**Hermit Thrush:** The first was 1 on 3 Oct in ET's Spirit Lake yard *Dickinson*. High counts were 11 on 4 Oct at L Hendricks *Howard* (PH) and 24 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc). No one reported any after 1 on 21 Oct in Cedar Rapids (BT).



*Sedge Wren, Boone, 17 August 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Wood Thrush:** Rita Goranson had the last two, 3 weeks apart: 1 on 25 Sep at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* and another on 14 Oct at Silver L *Worth*.

**Varied Thrush:** An adult male visited a feeder in *Polk* 24–26 Nov, and stayed in the neighborhood through the end of the season (Randy Hansen *vide* TMH).

**Gray Catbird:** The last was 1 on 24 Oct at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Northern Mockingbird:** The only report was 1 on 24 Oct SE of Lacona *Lucas* (DTh).

**American Pipit:** The only early report was 4 on 1 Sep at Blackmore Sod Farm *Cerro Gordo* (CJF). The next was 2 on 10 Oct at Anderson L *Hamilton* (TMH) and was followed by steady reports until the last 2 on 21 Nov at Sand Lake WA *Marshall* (AB-details). The most was 25 on 1 Nov at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT:** One was seen and heard at Dunbar Sl WMA *Greene* 11 Oct (\*SJD).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** A single individual was found among Cedar Waxwings 13 Nov on 470th St near Waterman Prairie O'Brien (LAS).

**Lapland Longspur:** The first was 1 photographed at Errington M WMA Polk 11 Oct (AB-photo). The first sizeable groups appeared 16 Nov when 900 were counted in Howard (LR) and 4,245 were counted north of Ankeny Polk (AB).

**Smith's Longspur:** All; 1 on 9 Oct at DU Marsh Clay (LAS) and 12 on 25 Oct at Errington M Polk (AB).

**Snow Bunting:** The first 9 were at Saylorville Res Polk on 2 Nov (AB). The first big flocks were found 16 Nov with 300 in rural Story (PH) and 250 near Lime Springs Howard (LR).

**Ovenbird:** The last was 1 on 24 Sep in rural Jackson (KMc).

**Northern Waterthrush:** The first few were 1 on 13 Aug in Story and another on 16 Aug in Linn (WO, BSc). All of the 8 reports were of single birds with the last on 24 Sep at Green Island Jackson (KMc).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** There were 11 reports of single birds starting with 1 on 25 Aug at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RG). Last was 1 on 13 Sep in Johnson (MHB).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** No reports.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** The first, by a week, was 1 on 14 Aug at Squaw Creek P Linn (JF). The most was 5 on the day at Grammer Grove Marshall 6 Sep (MP). The last was 1 on 4 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (AB).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** All; 2 at Chichaqua Greenbelt Polk 23–24 Aug (JMC, DTh), 1 on 7 Sep at Mines of Spain SP Dubuque (DAS), and 1 at Huron Island Des Moines 11 Sep (KMc), a 3rd-latest date.

**Tennessee Warbler:** The first was found 13 Aug at Hawkeye WMA Johnson. The high count was 94 on the day at Eagle

Pt Clinton, (KMc). One that discovered a Johnson jelly feeder on 2 Sep liked what it found and stayed through the very late date of 29 Oct (JLF).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** The first was 1 on 11 Sep at Huron Island Des Moines (KMc). In a long hike around L Hendricks Howard on 4 Oct, I counted at least 12 individuals (PH). The last was 1 on 25 Oct at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (MHB).

**Nashville Warbler:** The first and only August report was 1 on 28 Aug at Cottonwood RA Polk (RLC). The most was 10 at Eagle Pt Clinton 13 Sep (KMc) and the last was 2 on 19 Oct at Red Feather Prairie Polk (RLC).

**Mourning Warbler:** There were 8 reports of very small numbers spanning 25 Aug at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RG) to 5 Oct [3rd-latest] at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Also seen in Marshall, Tama and Clinton (MP, DP, TMH, KMc).

**Kentucky Warbler:** No reports.

**Common Yellowthroat:** The last was 1 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP Muscatine (KMc).

**American Redstart:** The most was 61 on 13 Sep at Eagle Pt. Clinton (KMc) and the last was 1 on 27 Sep at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (CRE).

**Cape May Warbler:** After having seen the last one in May at Grammer Grove, Mark Proescholdt then found the first one in fall on 8 Sep at Union Grove SP Tama. There were nine other reports from eastern and central Iowa with the last on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP Muscatine (KMc).

**Cerulean Warbler:** A juvenile on 27 Sep at George Wyth SP Black Hawk was 2nd-latest (TGS).

**Northern Parula:** There were eight reports from eastern Iowa with the last 1 on 2 Oct at Manhattan P Linn (BT).

**Magnolia Warbler:** The first was 1 on



*Black-throated Blue Warbler, Johnson, 7 September 2014. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.*

24 Aug at Chichaqua Greenbelt *Polk* (DTh). As many as 27 were counted 13 Sep at Eagle Pt. *Clinton* (KMc). The last was 1 on 27 Sep at Coralville *Johnson* (CRE).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** Mark Brown had both the last sighting of spring, and the first sighting of fall, on 13 Sep at Coralville Dam *Johnson*. There were 14 other sightings, 5 by MP including the last on 25 Sep at Union Grove SP *Tama*.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** There were twelve sightings from 1 on 20 Aug at Buffalo Creek P *Linn* (BSc) to 2 on 24 Sep in rural *Jackson* (KMc).

**Yellow Warbler:** The last was 1 on 25 Sep at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** After a summer with no reports, the first fall sighting was 1 on 20 Aug at Buffalo Creek WA *Dela-ware* (BSc). The last was 5 on 24 Sep in rural *Jackson* (KMc).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** There were three reports of this rare fall migrant, but none with details.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Six were found in a 20-day period: A male at

Macbride NA *Johnson* 7 Sep (LGR), a female at Sugar Bottom *Johnson* 9 Sep (JF), a female at Eagle Point *Clinton* 13 Sep (KMc), a male in Urbandale *Polk* 13 Sep (BE), a male at Sugar Bottom 22 Sep (JF), and a female a George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* 27 Sep (TGS).

**Palm Warbler:** The first was 1 on 13 Sep at Sugar Bottom *Johnson* (WWH), the most was 14 on 11 Oct at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB), and the last was 1 on 16 Oct at Cedar L *Linn* (WWH).

**Pine Warbler:** The only report was 1 on 24 Sep in rural *Jackson* (KMc).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** After the first, a lone individual on 16 Sep in ET's yard *Dickinson*, most reports were of multiple birds. Some high counts were 36 on 22 Sep at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), 30 on 27 Sep at Coralville *Johnson* (CRE), and 150 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** The last one of the year, on 16 Sep, was a surprise for RG and BVL at the non-traditional, northern location of Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo*.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** The first was 1 on 6 Sep at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP), the high count was 10 on 13 Sep at Eagle Pt *Clinton* (KMc), and the last was 1 on 27 Sep at Cherry Glen *Polk* (KVS).

**Canada Warbler:** Found often, but in small numbers beginning with 1 on 14 Aug in Marion *Linn* (JOD) and ending with 1 on 18 Sep at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Also reported from *Boone, Johnson, Marshall, and Polk*.

**Wilson's Warbler:** The first tied a 2nd-earliest date on 1 on 8 Aug at Waterworks P *Polk* (JB). The last was 1 on 5 Oct at Otter Creek M *Tama* (DP).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** No reports.

**Spotted Towhee:** There were two reports: 1 on 11 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 1 on 18 Oct at Green Belt L *Black*



*Chipping Sparrow, Ames, Story, 28 November 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Savannah Sparrow, Harrier M, Boone, 19 November 2014. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

*Hawk* (TGS). The median arrival date over the last 16 years is 3 Oct.

**Eastern Towhee:** The last few were found 10 Oct in *Muscatine* and *Louisa* by KMc.

**American Tree Sparrow:** The first few were 1 on 20 Oct at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP), 2 on 26 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 2 on 27 Oct in Mason City (BVL).

**Chipping Sparrow:** The last was 1 on 28 Nov at Ames *Story* (SJD-photo).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** At least two were still singing on territory 3 Aug at Heart Pond *Howard* (PH). There were two other reports: 1 on 27 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 1 on 3 Oct at Sedan *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Field Sparrow:** The last 2 were at Ada Hayden P *Story* on 22 Oct (WO).

**Vesper Sparrow:** The last 2 were in rural *Louisa* 10 Oct (KMc).

**Lark Sparrow:** The only report was 2 on 23 Aug at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (RLC).

**Savannah Sparrow:** As many as 80 were estimated at Sedan *Appanoose* 20 Oct (TNJ) and another 65 at Errington M *Polk* 30 Oct (RLC). The last was 1 on 18 Nov at Harrier M *Boone* (LGD).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** The only reports were from Neal Smith NWR *Jasper*. As many as 12 were counted there 19 Aug when post-breeding numbers were likely at a maximum (KVS). The last, found dead 21 Oct, probably died within a day or two of that date (KVS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Reported in August from Neal Smith *Jasper* where the most was 6 on 19 Aug (KVS), and in October from Union Hills and Zirbel Slough *Cerro Gordo* (RG, BVL, CJF). The last was 2 on 13 Oct at Zirbel Sl (BVL, CJF).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** The first was ex-



*Nelson's Sparrow, Terry Trueblood RA, Johnson, 11 October 2014. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Harris's Sparrow, Spring Run WA, Dickinson, 8 November 2014. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

tremely early on 4 Sep at Sedan *Appanoose* (TNJ). The fall median arrival over the last 26 years is 21 Sep, and the next report was very near that date on 20 Sep at Luton in *Woodbury* (GLV). Also reported from prairie/wetland habitat in *Cerro Gordo*, *Hardin*, *Johnson*, *Linn* and *Polk*. The most was 5 on 7 Oct at Errington M *Polk* (JB) and the last few were at Sedan 20 Oct (TNJ).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** The first few were found on 27 Sep at two locations, Pintail Wetlands *Hardin* and Saylorville Res *Polk* (MP, AB). High counts of 6–10 were found at Sedan *Appanoose*, Otter Creek M *Tama*, and Pintail Wetlands (TNJ, RLC, DP, MP). The last were at Sedan 20 Oct (TNJ).

**Fox Sparrow:** The first two were at Ada Hayden P *Story* 7 Oct and Waterworks P *Polk* 9 Oct (WO, JB). Widely reported in small numbers through the end of the season, the most was 12 on 6 Nov at Diamond L *Dickinson* (MHB).

**Song Sparrow:** The most was 27 on 25 Oct at Anderson L *Hamilton* (TMH).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** The first few were

about 10 days late on 22 Sep at Ada Hayden P *Story* and McCoy WMA *Boone* (WO, DCH). Reported in small numbers in central and eastern Iowa until the last on 30 Oct at Ada Hayden P (WO).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Began gathering in early October. At least 110 were estimated at Errington M *Polk* on 10 Oct (RLC), which was the most.

**White-throated Sparrow:** The first was 1 on 13 Sep at East P in Mason City (BVL), a week before the next sighting. As many as 120 were counted 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc) and 100 on 12 Oct at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (CRE). On 26 Nov, DCP photographed a likely White-throated Sparrow X Dark-eyed Junco near Fairfield *Jefferson*.

**Harris's Sparrow:** The first two were found 23 Sep at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) about 10 days before the next sighting on 4 Oct in *Boone* (LGD). The ten reports were scattered, with the most 10 on 18 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and 10 on 6 Nov at Diamond L *Dickinson* (MHB).



*Rusty Blackbird, Polk City WA, Polk, 1 November 2014. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**White-crowned Sparrow:** The first few were 1 on 1 Oct at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV), 1 on 1 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 3 on 4 Oct at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB). The most was 8 on 11 Oct at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** The first was a lone bird on 20 Sep in ET's Spirit L yard *Dickinson*. The only other September report was 3 on 26 Sep in Scott (RAS).

**Summer Tanager:** The last two were 1 on 27 Sep in Coralville *Johnson* (CRE) and 1 on 2 Oct at Mines of Spain *Dubuque* (DAS).

**Scarlet Tanager:** The last two were 1 on 22 Sep at McCoy WMA *Boone* (DCH) and 1 on 27 Sep at Coralville *Johnson* (CRE).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** The last was 1 on 15 Sep at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP).

**Blue Grosbeak:** There were only two reports: 6 on 13 Aug in rural *Woodbury* (GLV) and 1 on 24 Aug along the High Trestle Trail *Polk* (JG).

**Indigo Bunting:** The last few were 1 on

9 Oct at Kindlespire P *Clay* (LAS) and 5 on 10 Oct at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc).

**Dickcissel:** The most was 30 on 19 Aug at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS). The last was very late on 9 Nov at Errington M *Polk* (AB-details).

**Bobolink:** Began flocking in late August (KVS, BSc) and departed shortly after. There were two isolated late reports: 5 on 27 Sep at Pintail Wetlands *Hardin* (MP) and 1 on 4 Oct at Errington M *Polk* (AB).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** The last was 2 on 19 Oct at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB).

**Western Meadowlark:** There were no late-season reports.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** The last four were at Dan Greene Sl *Dickinson* on 25 Oct (LAS).

**Rusty Blackbird:** The first arrivals were found 24–26 Sep in *Jackson* and *Boone* (KMc, DCH). Some noteworthy numbers were 190 on 3 Nov at Polk City WA *Polk* (RLC), 100 on 7 Nov at Hales Sl *Dickinson* (MHB), and 110 on 16 Nov near Lime Springs *Howard* (LR). Also reported in *Clay*, *Dallas*, *Marshall*, *Story*, *Tama* and *Wapello*.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** There were three reports: 14 on 25 Oct in a rural *Dickinson* pasture (LAS), 20 on 3 Nov at Green Bay Bottoms *Lee* (JWR), and 21 on 9 Nov near Errington M *Polk* (AB).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Seen only at two sites where they breed: 2 on 10 Aug at Errington M *Polk* (BE) and 46 on 18 Oct at Dan Greene Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Orchard Oriole:** The last was a report of 4 on 24 Aug at the Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (RLC).

**Baltimore Oriole:** The last three reports were of late-season birds attending jelly feeders, with the very last a male on 16 Nov north of Burlington *Des Moines* (John Carter, CF).

**Purple Finch:** The first was 4 on 13

Sep at Eagle Pt. *Clinton* (KMc). The most was 16 on 9 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Red Crossbill:** No reports.

**White-winged Crossbill:** No reports.

**Common Redpoll:** No reports.

**Pine Siskin:** The first was 2 on 17 Sep in *Algona Kossuth* where MCK found as many as 60 by 15 Oct. Another 110 were estimated at *Errington M Polk* on 18 Oct (AB).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Two were at *Sand L Marshall* 26 Oct, a new location (MP). Also found in *Linn*, *Louisa*, and *Johnson*. KMc counted 209 on 10 Oct in various stops in *Louisa*.



*Purple Finch, Boone, 19 November 2014.*  
*Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

#### COMMENT

The number of reports contributed by observers this fall was down. This may have been because peak numbers of birds were down and many species were scarce or absent, perhaps in part because of exceptionally cool weather and an early arrival of winter weather. The total of 1994 reports was the lowest since 2001 (the high was 3,900 in 2006). With fewer reports, each one acquires added significance. They came from 66 field observers whose initials appear in the text and whose names are listed below, plus another 19 whose full names are contained in the text. Their contributions consisted not only of data, but also many supporting details, comments and photos. The comments are especially helpful in understanding the data, separating species, clarifying circumstances, and sometimes just adding perspective. Here is a short sample: “flushed unexpectedly from dry grass”, “sallied forth from low perches”, “terrorizing neighborhood birds”, “circling high over the Mississippi River”, “heading south in blustery winds”, “on the move tonight”, and “migrating south in snowfall accompanied by crows”.

These reports covered at least 261 distinct locations in Iowa from 59 of Iowa’s 99 counties. They enabled me to summarize the presence of 260 species from 1 August to 30 November 2014. At least some data were submitted on 20 other common, permanent residents, but were not used here. These 20 species are Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Ring-billed Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Horned Lark, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, and American Goldfinch.

This article also makes use of data collected and previously published elsewhere. Some of the sources of these data are USFWS fall aerial surveys along the Mississippi River, USFWS waterfowl counts at DeSoto NWR, Iowa DNR August Roadside Surveys, Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the IA-Bird listserv.



## CONTRIBUTORS

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# Raptor Banding at Hitchcock Hawk Watch, Fall 2014

*Jerry Toll*

The annual raptor migration monitoring that takes place each fall at Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch (HNCH) has been a primary focus for the past 12 years. For the last eight years we have also been banding raptors and collecting age, gender, health, and subspecies data on the individuals we capture. Here, we report on those efforts for the fall 2014 migration season.

## RAPTOR BANDING EFFORTS

This past banding season has been by far the most unusual and frustrating season since inception. Weather systems played a negative major role determining achieving objectives. Banding diurnal raptors commenced on 7 September on schedule. The month of September was typical as far as capture rates and weather systems, although we were stymied somewhat by the lack of availability of starlings for lure birds. House sparrows proved a nearly adequate substitute.

During the peak month of October, weather systems that drive diurnal raptor migration worked against monitoring efforts by forcing migration on a broad front rather than concentrating migrants on the Loess Hills ridges. As a result, diurnal raptor numbers were down by about 25% from a typical banding season. Species diversity of banded birds was perhaps the most disheartening aspect of this diurnal season. Only one American Kestrel was banded besides the three species that make up the bulk of our efforts (Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed hawks). The one bright spot was the ratio of juvenile to adult Red-tailed Hawks banded. After a nearly 50:50 ratio in 2013, the ratio in 2014 was more indicative of a successful breeding season (an 80:20 ratio). November began with a continuation of October's warm and mild weather with just a trickle of diurnal raptor movement. By the 10th it had changed rapidly into winter weather more typical of January. Despite five attempts during the rest of November, no further banding occurred.

## NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL BANDING ACTIVITIES

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding commenced on 10 October and was strong from onset considering that the 2013 season was at the bottom of their population cycle. The weather systems that disrupted the diurnal banding operations were advantageous for owl banding. By the end of October, 23 new owls were banded at Hitchcock; three others were recaptures of owls that had been previously banded. One recapture came from Hawk Ridge at Duluth, Minnesota, where it had been banded only eight days earlier. If that owl had traveled in a straight line it would have averaged more than 50 miles per night, a new record flight speed for our recaptures. The second recapture came from the Roosevelt National Forest in western North Dakota, our first from a site west of Iowa. The third recapture was banded last year by

our colleagues at Missouri River Bird Observatory, which was one of just 13 owls banded by them at Marshall, Missouri.

The Northern Saw-whet Owl banding season typically peaks during the first week of November. By the end of the third week of November their migration is done. During the period 1-9 November, we banded 13 more Northern Saw-whet Owls at HNCH. Our primary objective this season was to commence on 9 November. Sandy Reinken was to continue banding owls at HNCH

while I was to spend 3 nights banding at Waubonsie State Park 50 miles south of HNCH in the Loess Hills. Our objective was to recapture owls banded at HNCH this season to demonstrate that the Loess Hills are used by the owls as a migration corridor. We were unable to carry out this plan due to the persistent unseasonably cold weather that began on 10 November. Conditions were unsafe or considered unproductive for banding and no further work occurred until 20 November when the last owl of the season was banded. All told, 37 new Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded with 3 foreign recaptures totaling 40 birds. This tally is consistent with expectations in the first year after a population recovery cycle and is even more impressive considering we lost almost two weeks of prime banding time in November.

Veronica Mecko's Northern Saw-whet Owl banding efforts in southern Iowa were divided between two sites. She continued her efforts at Mount Ayr Wildlife Management Area in Ringgold County by netting on four nights, which produced four new captures. Her second site was south of Lamoni on private property in Harrison County, Missouri. She banded six owls in six nights at that location. Her efforts were hampered by scheduling conflicts and the presence of larger owls in close proximity to her mist nets that limited banding efforts due to fear of predation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board and Foundation for their continuing support, both financial and logistical, at Hitchcock Nature Center. Additional financial support was provided by The Audubon Society of Omaha, The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and Des Moines Audubon Society for the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding program. Our licensed banding crew of Sandy Reinken, Veronica Mecko, and me was generously supported by dedicated volunteers Greg Nelson, Teresa Ely, Beth Richmond, Jean Martin, Janis Paseka, Paul Tuck, and Ty Smedes.

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Table 1. Raptors banded at the Hitchcock Nature Center, Iowa, 2008-2014. The 2014 numbers are shown along with the total number banded and yearly average number banded during the 7-year study.

Species	2014 total	Total (2008-2014)	Yearly average (2008-2014)
Northern Harrier	0	1	<1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	25	207	30
Cooper's Hawk	9	122	17
Northern Goshawk	0	2	<1
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	2	<1
Swainson's Hawk	0	1	<1
Broad-winged Hawk	0	3	<1
Red-tailed Hawk	82	643	92
American Kestrel	1	4	<1
Merlin	0	8	1
Peregrine Falcon	0	7	1
Prairie Falcon	0	2	<1
Eastern Screech-Owl	0	1	<1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	38	306	51
TOTAL	155	1309	194

# Common Raven in Polk County

*Tyler M. Harms*

On 8 November 2014, my son Graham and I were birding Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County and found a Common Raven at the Big Creek spillway. At approximately 10:20 A.M., we arrived at the spillway parking lot to check for waterfowl, gulls, and other birds as well as watch the water flow down the spillway. As I was getting Graham out of the vehicle, I noticed a large dark bird flying toward us from the south. Viewing conditions were not ideal and the bird was backlit. Therefore, I immediately thought it was a Red-tailed Hawk based on its overall size and flight behavior (soaring, then flapping slowly, then soaring again). As the bird approached, I noticed that it was not a Red-tailed Hawk and that it was all black. It was similar in size to a Red-tailed Hawk with a beak much larger than that of an American Crow. The bird had a long, wedge-shaped tail that was nearly

half the length of the body of the bird. The bird continued approaching until it was approximately 40 m overhead, at which point I was able to put Graham down and view the bird through my binoculars. I noticed the large head and large, robust beak and nasal bristles. Overall, the bird was larger and had narrower wings than those of an American Crow. On the basis of these characteristics, I determined the bird was a raven and speculated it was a Common Raven and not a Chihuahuan Raven based on the location. The bird was alone and did not vocalize. I was able to view the bird for about ten seconds through binoculars before it disappeared behind trees flying north. Despite our efforts, we were unable to relocate the bird after our initial viewing.

On 23 November 2014, a Common Raven was found by Stephen J. Dinsmore at approximately 9:30 A.M. at the nearby Sandpiper Beach Recreation Area of Saylorville Reservoir and was subsequently seen by many others through at least 25 November. This is presumably the same bird originally found near the Big Creek spillway some 3 km to the north.

This is the 7th record of Common Raven in Iowa, the first being at Potter's Marsh in Dickinson County on 7 October 1956 (Sieh 1957) and the most recent at Hitchcock Na-



*Figure 1. Common Raven at Sandpiper Beach Recreation A, Saylorville Res, Polk, 23 November 2014. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*

ture Area in Pottawattamie County on 9 November 2007 (Johnson 2008). This is the first record of this species in central Iowa. The Common Raven is regular as far south as central Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin and has been slowly expanding southward, so Iowans should expect more records of this species in the future.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Johnson, A.M. 2008. Report of the Records Committee for 2007. 78:146.  
Sieh, J.G. 1957. First authentic record of Raven in Iowa. 27:21-22.

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## **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

The lead article of the March 1965 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* summarized the 1964-65 Christmas Bird Count. The 28 counts found a total of 108 species, an all-time high. Davenport had the most species with 71, but most count totals were in the 20s or 30s, modest compared to recent Iowa counts. Some of the more interesting finds were a Sage Thrasher in Des Moines, an amazing 46 Rough-legged Hawks at Buffalo Center, and two Wild Turkeys at Yellow River Forest, the first ever on an Iowa CBC. Only one Canada Goose was found. I noted at least five participants on these counts who are still active in Iowa and at least five others who went on to careers in ornithology or similar fields outside the state. The counts can be a good way to recruit future workers.

In another article, Jerry Kaufmann and Robert Ivins describe the effects of a seven inch rain and hail storm on nesting birds at newly developed Elk Creek Marsh in Worth County. Virtually all of the rail and waterfowl nests were destroyed, either by the hail or by the subsequent flooding. Least Bitterns, which had not started nesting when the event occurred, escaped the disaster and had reasonable nesting success.

Dean Roosa summarized bird banding activity by 22 individuals/teams. They banded a total of 24,215 birds of 180 species. Peter Petersen banded the most birds (4,706) and species (120) by any individual; the Iowa Conservation Commission banded 8,500 birds, mostly waterfowl. The most commonly banded species were Blue-winged Teal (6,082), Dark-eyed Junco (1,793), Purple Finch (1,507), and Mourning Dove (1,021). Interestingly, 951 Chimney Swifts were banded.

Former Editor Fred Pierce wrote an interesting article on the Passenger Pigeon in

Buchanan County and elsewhere in Iowa. With last year marking the 100-year anniversary of the death of the last Passenger Pigeon in the Cincinnati Zoo, this article provides a somewhat nostalgic look at the species in Iowa.

The field reports for the winter 1964-65 season listed a good assortment of typical winter species. However, with no mention of any Bohemian Waxwings, Evening Grosbeaks, or Common Redpolls and only a single report of Red Crossbill, it was not a winter finch year. As an indication of how the times have changed, seemingly all reports of Canada Geese and Bald Eagles were listed but no one reported any Wild Turkeys.

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

**Photos and graphics:** Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring: 28–30 August 2015, Fort Madison.

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Dallas, 4 September 2014. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Baltimore Oriole, Iowa City, Johnson, 1 September 2014. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.

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